

PROMOTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLANS

(The Prospect for Sustainable Greater Khartoum)

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ABSTRACT

Public participation (**PP**) is important and means more to the citizens, hence is not only about development plans, but also about lives and livelihoods. It offers citizens a perspective of their future, health, destiny, and community. As a result, **PP** encouraged an innovative process, that guarantees the efficiency of sustainable development plans, and promotes a sustainable new way of living in community. Sustainable development plans demand an increasing role of **PP**, within the frame of efficiency of sustainable planning process. Development plans in Greater Khartoum (**GK**), should perform a methodological process that is to be structured over distinct sequence stages, providing the development of continuous interactive, integrated and participative planning. The process of involving the public makes the results more relevant to the population's needs, and creates a livable city. In fact, participation provides local knowledge and thus makes the planner decisions more appropriate to local specificities. This paper states a short history of public participation in development plans. The history seeks to challenge the profession's view of participation, as simply the public processes designed and controlled by planners. Also it suggests a methodology for sustainable development plan (**SDP**) in **GK**.

Keywords: public participation (**PP**), sustainable development plan (**SDP**), Greater Khartoum (**GK**)



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept of involving the community as a framework for driving the urban decision making process, is premised on the idea that in order to maximize the quality of life of urban residents. It is appropriate to ask them what they think needs improving. People of all backgrounds are eager to define the future form of their communities, but they are severely handicapped by lack of information presented and organized, in a useful and accessible manner. Effective **PP** can help government officials and other professionals to create better planning alternatives. It makes a city where people have the feeling of belonging and a wish and not compulsion to stay in that place, to improve and build it, considerably reflects the essence of the notion of social sustainability. **Danijela, 2003**, described that, there is no sustainable city without creative activities of its citizens. An active citizen is a pre-condition. If a citizen is to be active, has to be interested. To be interested, has to be informed. To be informed has to live in a democratic system.

From the start of Mac Leans plan 1910 in **GK** limited **PP** actions were promoted, in order to involve the local agents, stakeholders and the population in the decision of specific local key issues, and define the appropriate priorities within the goals and strategies previously settled. This situation resulted in drastic defects in development plans in **GK**.

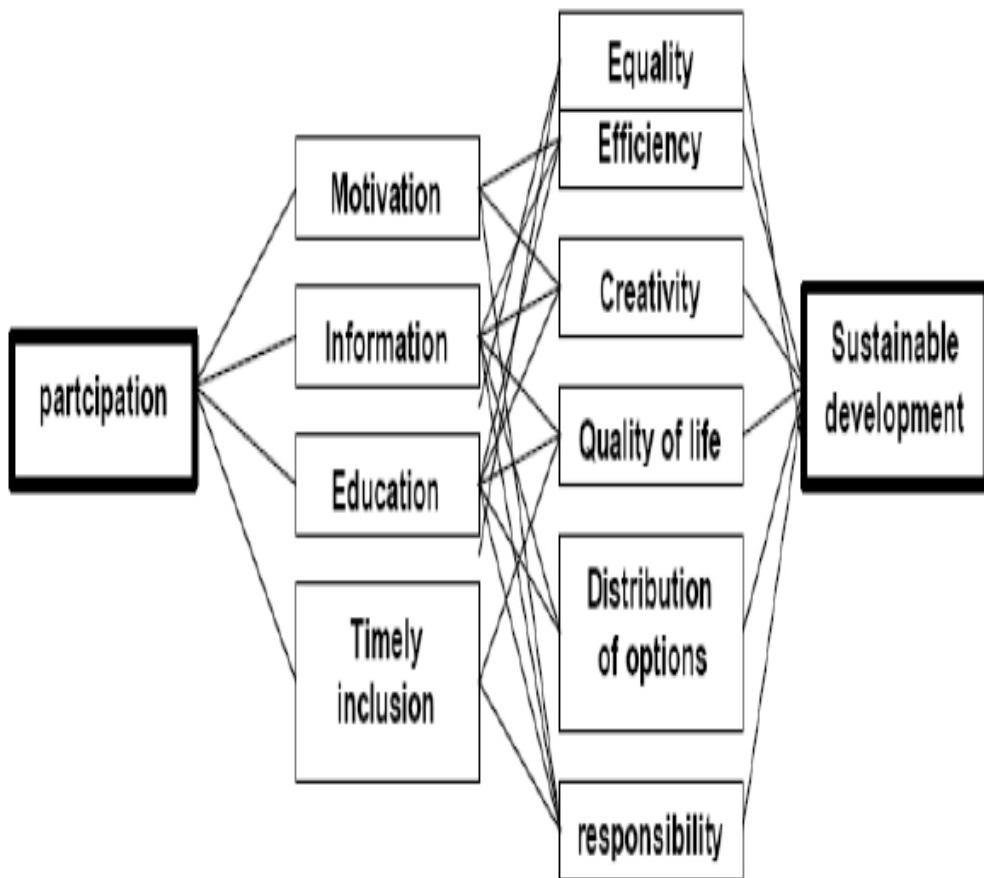
2.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (PP)

PP is defined as the mean by which members of a community are able to take part in the shaping of polices and the plans, that affect the environment in which they live (Whittick 1974). The idea of PP was first initiated in United States, by the advocacy planning movement, during the 1960's. The concept of it, "voice of the people", has become important in a planning decisions process (Diagram 1). In its various forms, participatory planning has been instigated by different institutions and within the context of many different agendas. Such agendas include political manipulation,



consultation, redistribution of power, and marginalized communities (Milovanovic, 2003).

Diagram 1: Participation of citizens as a necessary condition of achieving Sustainability



Source: Milovanovic, 2003

The reasons for encouraging the public to participate in development plans can be summarized as:

1. Presentation of democracy as a system that generates the right and freedom to express views. The right to access

information to lodged comments, to initiate legal proceedings, and to participate in all stages of planning process.

2. Encouragements of collaborative work decision-making process. A carefully designed participation program creates an open environment, to exchange information and ideas between the general public, decision makers, and the planners. This requires that planners consider an array of opinions; especially those rose by minority groups such as; low income, elderly populations, and the disabled. This way, participants establish a collective vision of the future, and many share responsibilities of any arises problems as well as founded solutions.

A desired development plan is characterized by the degree of the public involved in each step of the process. However, besides these advantages of involving the public in a development plan, there are also certain numbers of disadvantages associated with the process (Hudson Smith, 2005). These are;

1. Accessibility of necessary technologies to all involved groups of a community;
2. Trivialization of the decision making process; and
3. Possibility of bias, i.e. the inclusion of a desirable opinion in the system at all levels of the process.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN GREATER KHARTOUM

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since Khartoum was first assigned by the colonial authorities in 1898 as a capital city for Sudan, only four development plans were adopted.



1. Mac leans plan, Doxiadis plan, MEFIT plan and Doxiadis and Mustafa plan. Recently a new structural plan is in the process of being prepared. As stated by Hafazalla, 2008, these plans were not adopted on regular or periodical basis as it should be, its preparation was often linked with the prevailing political and economic condition. The Mac Clean plan, 1912, was the first plan for GK. It was fully implemented despite difficulties with qualified and skilled manpower and financial resources.
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2. The Doxiadis plan 1960-1980, the second plan, was officially approved in 1960 and consequently implemented by constructing new roads and two bridges with enlargement of the old bridge over the White Nile. A few villages were incorporated into the urban fabric as demand for residential and other land uses. It is estimated that the overall performance of the plan did not go beyond 40% as the plan failed to anticipate growing waves of population. Further, failure to implement the major relocation proposals of the railway station, the airport and the army barracks has exacerbated deficiencies, and, coupled with financial and administrative decisions, left possibilities for the government for a fresh planning exercise for Khartoum Metropolitan.
3. The MEFIT plan 1975-1990, was the third plan and although the plan was not approved officially (mainly due to administrative shortcomings) its orientation and recommendations continued to guide the planning of Khartoum for two decades. It is estimated that the plan's overall performance is only 20%. The main obstacle that hampered the performance includes the general weakness of

the executive planning institutes, lack of project finances, political instability and the conflagration of squatter settlements in an un-preceded wave of rural urban migration.

4. Doxiadis Associates and AM Mustafa, the fourth plan 1990-2000, was presented to the Council of Ministers and it is estimated that the plan performance was only 15%. It is somewhat paradoxical that the plan remains un-implemented, yet more actions and projects in the structure plan have actually been executed. Perhaps the reasoning behind having a ‘Structure plan’ rather than a rigid Master or a set Development Plan is after all what was needed (KPP-05).

3.2 CURRENT SITUATION

Khartoum Planning Project 2005 (KPP-05) is a new plan and invitation for tender was issued during 2005 for local and international consultants to propose their capacity to carry out this task. According to the invitation book the plan is expected to consider demographic changes for a horizon of 20 years. The structural plan will be for 10 years and subject to monitoring and evaluation programs. Monitoring and evaluation will be effective every 5 years during the implementation phase, and can suggest changes in local plans. The governor of Khartoum State, the Ministry of Physical Planning and Public Utilities, and the local research are all working together on this plan. The UN-HABITAT office in Khartoum is expected to provide some assistance for this project.

Developers in GK have played huge roles in influencing the way development occurs, particularly through project-based planning. Many recent developments were results of large and small-scale developers who purchased land, designed the district and



constructed the development from scratch. Almogran project (Centre of Khartoum), for example, was largely an initiative pushed by private developers, who sought to redevelop the waterfront, into high-end residential and commercial areas.

3.3 PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The traditional methods used in GK were not suitable, for meaningful involvement. It has faces so many problems such as; lack of integrity, incomplete databases, and difficulty in handling ad hoc queries and updating system information. New methods of participation need to be proposed to supplement traditional ones like public meeting and consultation documents (Gumaa', 2006). Why the development plans in GK did not work and why the existing conditions are far behind the desired levels? (Hafazalla, 2008). As the author suggest that the main reason behind this are the following factors: -

1. lack of knowledge and willingness of the planners to include the public in the development plan from the very beginning,
2. Insufficient knowledge of information technology potentials in solving the development plan problems.

Development plans in GK involves five key groups of people each with different roles (Table1) these comprising:

1. National politicians: providing the legislative framework for planning and developing national development policies
2. Local politicians: using the national framework to implement development at the local level and setting local political priorities
3. Planning administrators: advising local politicians on the implementation at the local level of agreed national and local policies



4. Technical planners: preparing and submitting actual development proposals for approval by the local planning administration and implementing approved schemes
5. The public: electing national and local politicians and offering their views at various stages of the plan preparation and development implantation process

Table 1 Actors in Urban Planning in KM

Urban Planning Committees	Actors in Planning				
	National politicians	Local politicians	Planning administrators	Technical Planners	The public
State Committee	1		13		0
Delegated Committee			5		0
Technical Committee			12		0
District Committee		1		7	2

Source: author

Development plans in GK are the responsibility of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Public Utilities. There are four planning committees (Table 1). The state committee is a highest committee in the state and its functions are to set the comprehensive planning of the state. The delegated committee is concerned with the renewing of approvals that surpass one year. The technical committee is concerned with the approvals of the details planning. The district committee concerns with the approval of the services buildings and executes regulations drawn from the others committees (Zakia, 2008). Although these committees include a number of experienced members in the field of urban planning but there is a limited number of public who participate in the produced output (Table 1).

4.0 PROPOSED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)

Some major decisions in GK concerning development plans are often taken without satisfactory considerations, for their impact on the urban structure. For example, METHIT plan and Doxiadis and Mustafa structural plan have allocated the new proposed international airport at Alhaj Yousif north-east GK. Later, in 2006 the authorities choose a new location south-west GK, without adequate consideration of the expected changes in GK structure, and the dynamics of land uses created by the change in land prices. Such decision must have been incorporated within a new structural plan, not to be taken as an independent major planning decision.

Current development trends in GK are so diversified and many-sided that it is not possible to get one consolidated picture, of the philosophical basis of the applied planning concepts (khair, 2010). The suggested methodology to be used for the proposed sustainable development plan (SDP) in GK consists of a process of six sequential stages as elaborated below.

Stage 1-Data Collection

This stage contains systems of collecting, analyzing and evaluating data about the users and the case study. It identifies the followings;

1. The contents and aims of a system;
2. the user groups and their requests;
3. the structure of used case process; and
4. means of collecting data and analysis of process

Stage 2-Data Analysis

This stage contains the system checklist, user profiles and thematic and spatial data. It defines the followings;

1. The system and the case study.
2. Users requests checklist;
3. Influencing factors concerning development plans in general and the case study in specific.

Stage 3-Strategy Development

This stage contains the summary of the system checklists and user's needs, based on the analysis of thematic and spatial data. It defines the followings;

1. Matching of result- expectation of user groups requested from the system and technology available;
2. Summary of the general requirements, and those concerning the specific case study; and
3. Asses' type of software and technology to be used, to develop e-planning system, as well as the data type involved. This is in relation to data modeling tools, visualization tools, simulation tools and interaction tools.

Stage 4-Quick win proposal development

This stage transfers the summary of stage 3 to design language in order to;

1. Produce technical models that mediate designer's language to facilitate coding and cooperation.
2. Develop interactive model for system interface.



3. Implements quick win proposal with its most essential functions.

Stage 5- proposal evaluation

This stage acts as a base for discussion, about technical development of the system. Users use their local government web site to;

1. Assess the quick win proposal.
2. Validate the models produced by quick win proposal.

Stage 6-System implementation

This is a revision and evaluation stage. It revises the system in general and identifies the followings;

1. Revision of the models produced, for quick win proposal, in term of the stated
2. evaluation.
3. Develop system optimization, based on the revised model.
4. Implementation of result and optimized system development.

These stages are developed sequentially, and dependent of each other, so that the next stage only begins after the evaluation/validation of the previous one. For this evaluation it is crucial for the population to be involved in the process, giving the decision makers an accurate knowledge of the area and its specific needs. During all its stages – from data collection to implementation – the process must have both the population and administration's participation, through constant evaluation and validation, in order to guarantee that the relation between the community and the final urban proposal, as well as its faster implementation. It is important to mention that the population's involvement and participation, as well as of other interested parties, is a decisive factor for the success of the Sustainable development plans.

PP accompanies the process at all stages, either by providing information or by the creation of plan monitoring commissions. The effective participation of both population and local administration during the entire process is a major factor for its efficiency, since increasing the partaking of the intervening actors prevents the occurrence of potential conflicts, guaranteeing a faster acceptance of the new ideas for urban structure. Another major factor for the efficiency of the Sustainable development plan is the implementation stage, during which the project's execution is permanently evaluated.

Some Software is proposed as participation and commenting tool for the suggested sustainable development plan in GK (table 2). This Software showing the residents the effects of different proposals, and allowing them to participate actively in the development plan. Also illustrates the utilization of the Internet and web technologies, to increase public knowledge and education in the development plan. This should be presented in a web site which offers an easy and fast access to desired information and gives opportunity for users to test their understanding of collaboration, in development plan through some simulations and scenarios. The web site also provides an environment of discussions and message exchange among the users.

Table (2) Proposed Software of each stages

Stages	Stage Contents	Participation of public in various stages of the planning process	Internet Software should be designed for each stage
Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The contents and aims of a system; ◦ The actor groups and their requests; ◦ The structure of used case process; ◦ means of collecting data and analysis of process 	information regarding Problems in the field	On-line Polls
Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The system and the case study. ◦ Actors requests checklist ◦ Influencing factors concerning IePA and the case study in specific 	Discussion about actual problems or wishes and visions for the future	On-line Discussion Forums
Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Matching of result ◦ Summary of the general requirements ◦ Asses' type of software and technology to be used 	Requests to give opinions, conditions and approvals on development projects	On-line Services – forms and documents in electronic form
Stage 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Produce technical models that mediate designer's language to facilitate coding and cooperation. ◦ Develop interactive model for system interface. ◦ Implements quick win proposal with its most essential functions. 	Public insight in planning documents, alternative options and scenarios with the possibility to react	On-line GIS, 3D , VR
Stage 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Assess the quick win proposal. ◦ Validate the models produced by quick win proposal 	Interactive participation of public in the creation of a planning solution	On-line Planning Support Systems (PSS)
Stage 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Revision of the models produced for quick win proposal in term of the stated evaluation. ◦ Develop system optimization based on the revised model. ◦ Implementation of result and optimized system development. 	Participation of all participants in plan adoption	On-line Decision Making Support Systems (DMSS)

Source: Author



5.0 CONCLUSION

One of the cornerstones of democracy is the idea that PP is essential to good government. The key benefit of it is to improve or enhance outcomes through more informed decisions. PP is about sharing information and involving the community and key stakeholders in the decision making process. It includes the implicit commitment that the community's contribution will influence the decision. The success of the development plan depends on the active participation and co-operation of the people. The traditional methods used for development plan in GK were not suitable for meaningful involvement.

It has faces so many problems such as; Lack of integrity, incomplete databases, and difficulty in handling ad hoc queries and updating system information.

New methods of participation need to be proposed to supplement traditional ones like public meeting and consultation documents. Accordingly, the local planning authorities in GK are required to adopt the suggested methodology for the development plans, and to develop web sites policies and procedures, for ensuring pp, in community development issues.

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